



THE MIMIC ART--ITS SPONSORS, ITS ARTISTS AND ITS PATRONS

Hager's Theatre



On Monday June 21st. Hagers Theatre (late Star) will be re-opened by The Ashton Stock Company in the four act new and original melo drama entitled "The Sheriff". The plot deals with the cattle rustlers of the south. The scenes are laid in Los Cruces New Mexico and certain incidents of the play are taken from the life of one of the greatest gun fighting Sheriffs ever known in this country. The play opens at Judge Dawson with Carson the head of the gang asking for the hand of Kate Dawson. She refuses him. Her heart being given to the Sheriff. Enraged at the refusal Carson gains the confidence of Ricca to blacken the character of the Sheriff. She informs Kate that the Sheriff has ruined her Kate and the father dismiss the Sheriff there is a raid of the gang. Their plans are frustrated. They are landed in Jail. Only to be dismissed by the Jury who has been intimidated. The Judge is shot by Ricca. The Sheriff is accused of the murder. But finally clears himself, and he and Kate are happily reunited. The climax are exciting and original. There is not a dull moment in the play and the comedy is well woven into the love scenes. The characters are all real men and women. Miss Lily Branscombe the favorite and clever leading lady, will be seen as Kate a part in which she excels. Herbert Ashton at "The Sheriff" is the robust manly gunfighter to the life. Miss Stewart will be cast for Briget which will prove her worth as a character woman. Miss Hilda Graham has a very strong part as the Spanish girl Ricca, and is sure to become a favorite. Mr. George Mortimer the comedian will be seen as Judge Dawson. Mr. Lawrence late of the Baker Stock is cast for the villain. Mr. Walte Wistrand as the old negro servant. Mr. Bernhard and Mr. Smith will be seen as greasers. The policy of the house will be a change of bill every Thursday and Monday. The latest moving pictures between the acts.

This company is composed of artist excellent in their special line of business. Notably is the charming young leading lady Miss Lily Brans-

combe who has won the hearts of thousands of theater lovers by her winsome acting. Miss Branscombe is an actress of rare talent. Her versatility is remarkable. She is as much at home in a rough soubrette as she is in the great emotional part of "Sapho". In which she will be seen the last half of the opening week. "Sapho" is one of Miss Branscombes favourite parts as it gives her unlimited opportunities to show her ability also to wear some beautiful gowns. During the season at Hagers Theatre Miss Branscombe will wear some exquisite dresses that will surely gladden the hearts of the lady patrons. This clever leading lady is sure to become the most popular that has ever appeared in Astoria.

The leading man and stage director Herbert Ashton is also an actor of great ability. Having played with some of the greatest stars in America. Mr. Ashton was also with Danial Frawley during his oriental tour. His ability as a stage director is well known. Miss Stewart is one of the youngest character women on the coast and is sure to become very popular. The comedian of the company Mr. George Mortimer is direct from the east where he created the part of 'Steve' in the Virginian. Miss Hilda Graham is an exceptionally bright actress and the remainder of the company are all splendid. Altogether this company is evenly balanced and sure to please the theatre goers of Astoria.

Heart Is the Art of Greatest Appeal

It is a strange life, in its hours of effort and achievement, that the actor or the actress must live.

Let us set the stage.

To the rear, a curtained wall and exit; on the sides, more curtained walls; in front, a little row of glaring garish lights.

Here, within these narrow confines, the people of the world of stage-land have their being. Here all their senses have their exercise and play. It is a small place, cramped and unreal.

Beyond that little row of lights lies



GEORGIA HARPER.

Leading Lady, who will appear tonight in "Nell Gwynne" at the Astoria Theatre. The upper left is Jos. Die trich, leading man in "Nell Gwynne." Upper right is a view of Miss Harper in "Sapho."

a dark domain—but it is peopled, densely peopled, and it is voiced, with the Voice of the Multitude. Out in that dark pit, among the people, sits Judgement, beholding the lighted tableau. And when Judgement gives the sign the Voice speaks its decrees. And the word of the Multitude, thus given, means exaltation and delight, or misery and dejection to the men and women who move in the pictures of the play.

When the curtain rises upon the first act of a drama, the distance between the audience and the players is infinitely great. The "people out in front" have come from their homes, their places of business, carrying with them the dull worries, or the intense practical thoughts which arise from their individual avocations. They have had no time to shake off the influence of monotonous daily circumstance. Their minds are hard and cold.

It is the art of the actor and actress to eliminate the "distance" between player and people. The audience, if the player is to triumph, must cast aside the leaden weight of its cares and circumstance, forget for the time the actualities of ordinary existence, and move over the magic highway of imagination into the land of make-believe.

An actress, for instance, may labor never so hard in the interpretation of a human emotion, a dramatic climax, a tragic situation; she may apply to her work the highest discriminative faculties of a brilliant mind; accord-

ing to her own conception she may live her part exactly as the original of her fancy lived it; she may follow, with extreme nicety of application, the theory that art begins where imitation ends—that it is the perfect counterfeit of reality—and yet she may fail, dismally, irretrievably fail.

A critical audience may decree that she has admirably caught the psychology of her characterization—and the reviewers may write it down—and still she may have failed. For the distance that the footlights spread between the actress and her audience

may not have been diminished. If the people leave the theatre talking about "psychology" and "art" the performance has been to little purpose, so far as the player is concerned. It may have been brilliant, but it did not make the people forget; and as long as they are capable of cold philosophizing, their imagination is still asleep.

When you sit in an audience and see the people leaning forward, gazing intently at the heroine and hero of the drama; when you see ladies carrying their handkerchiefs to their eyes, when you note, with the fall of the last curtain, how the multitude is gradually "coming to," when you hear women express their feelings in that time-worn but always useful safety-valve of emotion, "its just grand," and note that your male neighbor blurts out "great"—then you know that the actor or actress has struck home. The critics may fuss and fume and pick flaws as much as they please, they may discuss delinquencies of method and poise and pose, they may delve for "psychological defeats," and all that. But the big truth sticks out that during that performance the "distance" disappeared, the people have crossed the footlights and lived their little hour in the realm of romance—lived it even as the priests and priestesses whose business it is to serve at the altar of art.

Perhaps the underlying logic of it is that the art of the stage cannot be based strictly and exclusively upon mental appeal. To be worth while,



the art of the actress must reach the heart.

All this, I should here explain, is due to an interesting chat with Miss Georgia Harper, whose performances at the Ingomar, during the past three weeks, have brought her into such high favor with the theatre patrons of Eureka. It should be added that, while she might not agree, as to expression, with all I have said, I have attempted to follow, in the main, the line of reasoning I perceived in the drift of her conversation.

We have been talking of problem plays. I ventured the opinion that the problem play, with its penitent Jezebels and Magdalens, could be dispensed with, without loss in the attractiveness of the stage or in benefit to the people. Miss Harper demurred. The problem play, she argued is practically the only vehicle for expression, on the stage, of truths which, however unbeautiful, should from time to time be made manifest.

No agency, she urged, can reach so many people as can the stage; and none can present a lesson of life more impressively.

The better class of problem plays she insisted, operates to raise a barrier against transgression, and at the same time to make the world more charitable in its judgements and humane in its instincts respecting those who have erred and who would truly repent.

"Take Zaza as an example," she said. "Here was a girl reared without the guarding influence of a home. She was of Latin temperament, impulsive, emotional. Is it so strange, when we stop to consider,

The Pleasant "Jewel"

One of the really pleasant places to spend a half-hour, almost daily, is the handsome little "Jewel" the best appointed any best appreciated moving-picture house on the upper coast. It is fast growing in popularity, which it justly deserves.

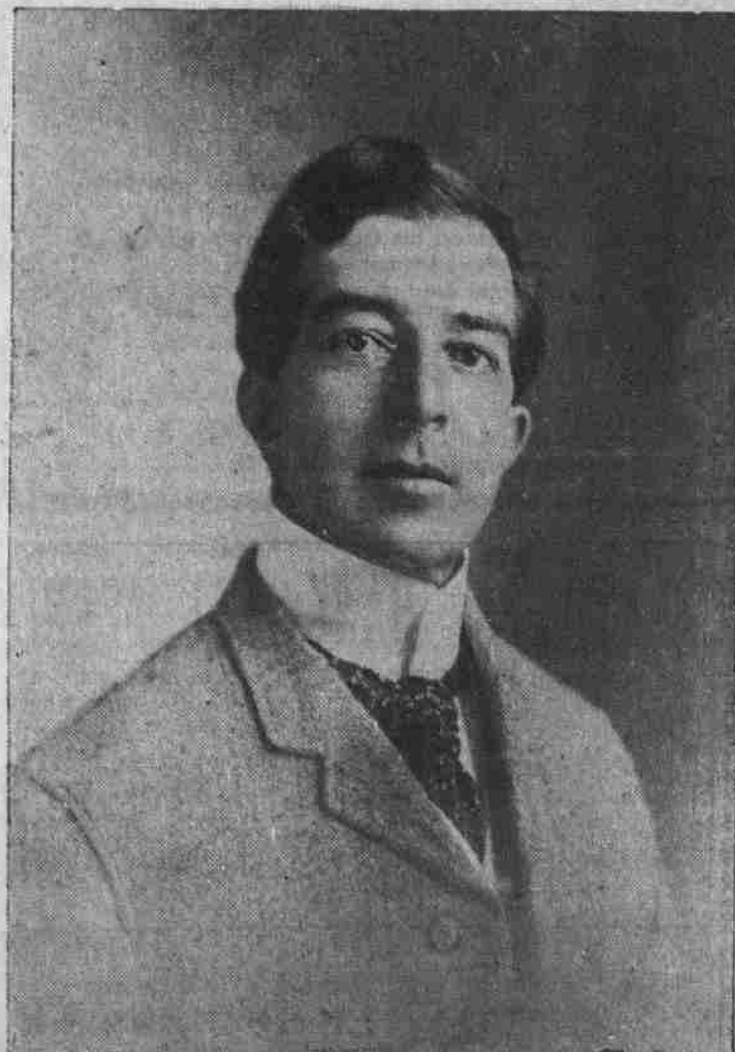
that she would have lived and loved as she did with Dufresne? Her realization of the wrong she did was inadequate, in the very nature of things. Can any scene depict a nobler change than that which came into her life upon her discovery that Dufresne had deceived her; that he was married, and the father of a child of tender years? Her great love had purified her and fortified her. Who will deny her the credit of her splendid triumph over self, or question the value of the lesson that triumph teaches?

"But there is another class of problem plays I can have no sympathy with," she went on. "I could never have any sympathy with Elizabeth in 'East Lynne,' for instance. It might be possible to feel a certain pity for this woman, in the weakness of her fall; but it is beyond me to comprehend redemption for a woman so base as to abandon her own offspring in order to go the way of wickedness."

There, in those two little speeches, Miss Harper betrays, I believe, her personal temperament as it bears upon her splendid gift of eliminating the "distance" I have heretofore mentioned. A heart sympathy threads through her nature, and it is her sympathy which kindles the flame of her genius.

That explains why her "Sapho" is outranked by her "Zira," strong as her characterization of the former role may be. For Sapho, however she may have been elevated by her love of Jean, at heart is selfish to the end. Zira, by her self-abnegation, conquers her selfishness and with it her sin, and rises to a plane upon which she can seek communion in sympathy, with the sternest of those that sit in judgement.

It is as natural as can be. In "Sapho," the heart interests is largely artificial; in "Zira," it becomes real. and in "Zira" Miss Harper triumphs. It is easy for her to touch the heart when the play-builder gives her a chance; therefore it is easy for her to be an artist.



HERBERT ASHTON.

Leading man of the Ashton Stock Co.



LILY BRANSCOMBE.

Leading lady of the Ashton Stock Co.